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PRESENT TENDENCIES IN CHINESE BUDDHISM

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In the rapid transformation of thought and life which is sweeping over Eastern Asia as a result of the impact of Western civilization upon oriental culture, there is one phase that is being watched with special interest by students of the history of religions on account of what it portends for the spiritual future of the oriental peoples in particular and of the world in general, namely, the reaction of the old native religions to modern influences. The disruptive effect of modern science upon ancient faiths is well known, but it is not to be supposed that the latter are so valueless and discredited as to succumb readily to the onslaught of new ideas and pass out of existence quietly without an effort at self-defense. On the contrary, the danger that faces them serves often as a powerful stimulus to rouse the old religions to renewed activity and reformation in an attempt to adapt themselves to changed conditions and so retain their hold upon the loyalty of their followers. A classic instance of this kind in European religious history is the so-called Counter-Reformation within the Roman church and the accelerated development of its missionary zeal immediately following the Protestant Reformation. We find today in India reform movements within Hinduism, as indicated by the organization of the Brahma Samaj and similar bodies; in Japan, the nationalization of Shinto and the active revival of Buddhism; and in China the frustrated attempt to make Confucianism the state religion of the republic and lately signs of awakening in Chinese Buddhism, after centuries of quiescent existence.

It will be recalled that in the history of Buddhism, China occupies a very important place. It was here that reformed or Mahayana Buddhism received its greatest development and from here spread into Korea and Japan. In the sixth century when Buddhism was threatened with extinction in the land of its birth, Bodhidharma, the twenty-eighth Indian Patriarch, removed his seat from India to China and became the first Chinese Patriarch, thus making China the center of the Buddhist church of that time. Modern students of Buddhism know that for much of our knowledge of the life and teachings of Sakyamuni and of the history of India and its condition in the time of the founder, we are indebted to the records of the Chinese pilgrims, Fah-hsien, Hiuen-tsang, and I-ching, who visited India in the fourth and seventh centuries and spent years of research there. Only through the French translation of Renusault in 1837 did any of these records become first available for Western scholars, and it is interesting to note in passing that the exact birthplace of Buddha was not located until toward the end of the nineteenth century with the help of data found in those records. While it is correct to say, as Fenollosa and others have done, that China owes much of its finest in literature and art to Buddhism, it is equally correct to say that Buddhism in its historic development and expansion owes much to China. China is still the largest Buddhist country in the world, and in its language the most complete and extensive canon of Mahayana Buddhism is to be found. What will become of Buddhism in China will largely determine the fate of that religion in Asia, and on this account the present manifestation of new life-currents running through this old faith in China is of unusual interest and significance.

The reform movement in Chinese Buddhism began a little over ten years ago in the closing decade of the now defunct Manchu Dynasty. Those were thrilling days for the nation, astir in its every part with new life. Within the compass of

those ten short years were crowded together events of tremendous moment, such as had never occurred at any other time in the history of Eastern Asia. The year 1898 saw the abortive launching of the educational and political reforms by Emperor Kuang-hsu in collaboration with K'ang Yu-wei, which brought down upon them the fury of the then reactionary Empress Dowager and resulted in the virtual imprisonment of the Emperor and the flight of K'ang from the country. Two years later, in 1900, came the cataclysm of the Boxer Uprising, the humiliation of the Imperial Court and its ignominious flight to far-away Si-an-fu. When the Empress Dowager returned to Peking she was a wiser woman, and espoused the cause of reform. In 1904-5 the war between Japan and Russia was fought and the spectacular victory of Japan over the forces of the northern Octopus stirred the hearts of all Asiatic peoples with new hopes and ambitious dreams of the future. In 1908 the Imperial Court, after having sent special commissions to Japan and Europe for the study of constitutional government, and having received their favorable report, announced a program for the gradual transformation of the government into a constitutional monarchy and authorized self-government for the provinces and districts. Had the program been worked out to its culmination, China would have been a constitutional monarchy in 1913. But something happened which deflected the course of events. In 1908 occurred the mysterious death of Emperor Kuang-hsu, still in his thirties, simultaneously with the Empress Dowager, and with the strong hand of the old lady withdrawn from the helm the ship of state drifted into a condition which set the stage for the Revolution of 1911.

It was in those days of national self-consciousness and social and political upheaval, which wrought havoc to conventional attitudes and antiquated traditions, that the Buddhist church first felt the shock of changed times and the challenge of the new day. For better self-preservation and

expression the Chung Hua Fu Chiao Tsung Hui (Chinese National Buddhist Society) was organized under the leadership of Chi Ch'an Ho Shang, abbot of Tien T'ung Ssu Monastery, Ningpo. The inauguration meeting was held at Liu Yun Ssu Monastery, Shanghai, in April, 1910, and an ambitious program was adopted, of which the following were its chief provisions (free translation):

1. This society is formed by the union of all Buddhist monks.
2. With branches all over the country, it exercises supervision over all the monasteries and monks.
3. All monks, formally admitted into the Order, are given certificates attesting to their membership in the society.
4. No monk is permitted to receive any pupil [candidate for the Order] unless the candidate is a bona fide applicant and of good family.
5. No monastery is permitted to alienate any of its property without authorization from the society.
6. Observance of monastic rules should be strictly enforced; for violation of the same rules, monks are to be punished.
7. Seminaries for the training of candidates for the Order are to be established, and in it Buddhist scriptures and Chinese classics are to be taught.
8. Persons under twenty years of age are not to be admitted into the Order; also those who have not had three years' theological training.
9. For monks to hire themselves out for the performance of funeral services, especially appearing in funeral processions, is considered derogatory to the dignity of the monastic order, and so the practice is to be strictly prohibited.

We note that the society aimed to purify the monastic order of its existing evils. Of them, the two most prominent are the ignorance of the monks in the elements of their own religion and the mercenary spirit of the monks in rendering their religious services to the people, hence the emphasis placed upon better theological preparation of the candidates and the prohibition of the monks taking part in the funeral services.

Other societies that appeared at that time in different parts of the country were: Fo Chiao Kung Hui (the Buddhist

Church Club), Chung Hua Wang Man Tsu Hui (the Yellow Swastika Society, corresponding to the Red Cross Society in its objects), Fo Chiao Chin Te Hui (Buddhist Moral Endeavor Society), Fo Hsueh Yen Kyeu She (Buddhist Research Society), etc. Two magazines were published as organs of the new movement: *Fo Chiao Ts'ung Pao* (Buddhist Miscellany) and *Fo Chiao Yueh Pao* (Buddhist Monthly).

This was the first wave of Buddhist revival. In its nature it was political rather than spiritual, and it resulted in better organization rather than moral reformation. As a reaction to external circumstances enthusiasm surged high at first, but there was nothing within the Order to uphold it, and so, when the first impetus had spent itself, the movement fell to pieces. One by one the activities such as educational and charitable institutions, lectures and magazines were given up, and the various societies, which had sprung up like mushrooms, disappeared as quickly.

In justice to the movement it must be said that the Revolution of 1911, which resulted in the formation of the Republic, was at least in part responsible for the breakdown of the revival. The spirit of the Revolution was iconoclastic, especially toward monastic Buddhism, and the Republican government has not dealt kindly with it. Although the constitution has promised religious liberty and equality of treatment to all religions, yet the government has seen fit to exercise stringent supervision over Buddhism. In doing this it is merely keeping up the tradition of the past dynasties which had always looked upon Buddhism as a ward of the state, owing to the fact that historically Buddhism was introduced into China through royal patronage and had been more or less dependent for its support upon the munificence of the imperial court. Perhaps the other reason for government supervision is that official China, being Confucianist in its political and social philosophy, is always apprehensive of a religion which values monastic life as superior to the life of

the household and so thinks that it should be carefully guarded against too successful a propagation lest it weaken the state which is built, according to Confucian tenets, upon the family as its cornerstone.

Whatever the motive behind the governmental policy, soon after the political reorganization of the country was fairly well in hand, President Yuan Shi-kai, first president of the Republic, ordered to be promulgated through Parliament in 1915, "Regulations for Government Supervision of Temples and Monasteries." While these regulations were supposed to apply to Buddhist and Taoist institutions without discrimination, it was clear that owing to the fact that Buddhist institutions far outnumber those of the Taoist faith and that Taoism has no monks anyway, the regulations would fall more heavily upon the Buddhists—in fact, that was the intention of the government. The government justified itself by arguing that temples and monasteries are public institutions and many of them are of historic and artistic importance, and so supervision was necessary to prevent their falling into private hands. The chief features of the regulations are: (1) registration of temples and monasteries, monks and nuns; (2) taxation of temple property; (3) non-alienation of temple property; (4) subjection of religious activities and preaching services to police regulation.

This action brought forth vehement protest from the Buddhists, and because of this protest and also of the fall of the Yuan régime in 1916, the regulations were not enforced. But in retaliation for the protest, the government closed down the National Buddhist Society, on the pretext that its existence was inimical to public safety. The society was reorganized after Yuan's fall, but in 1917 it was again closed by the government, at the time when the regulations were put into effect.

As an illustration of the way the government has dealt with Buddhist establishments, when pressed by circumstances,

we recall the fate of Lung Hua Ssu, an ancient and famous monastery in the western suburb of the city of Shanghai. In prerepublican days, it enjoyed wide popularity, not only on account of its architecture but also of its beautiful rural surroundings. In the springtime its courtyards were thronged with pilgrims and children who came to worship and to enjoy the many-colored peach blossoms for which the countryside around the temple is famous. Then came the Revolution of 1911 and with it the battalions of new soldiers in khaki uniforms. Some of them were despatched to Shanghai for its protection. But there were no barracks and the government had no money to build them. Someone with a business mind, but little capacity for spiritual values, suggested that the commodious equipment of Lung Hua Ssu was available and the army could have it for less than a song, for the monks were powerless to resist. And so one morning soldiers came, turned out the monks, and established themselves there. That was eight years ago and the khaki-uniformed soldiers are still there. The droning voices of the bonzes in their chanting, the temple bells, and the footsteps of pilgrims in springtime have all disappeared, and in their place one hears the mingled notes of the bugle and the drum, and the measured thud of the soldiers' boots resounding in the yards as they practice the goose step to the rhythm of the "Left-Right" of the leader. A sight which one can hardly forget on entering the main hall is to see in place of the beautiful tapestries, candlesticks, kneeling stools, and burning lamps—the paraphernalia of worship and adoration—the entire floor space crowded with stacks of rifles with shining bayonets, soldiers' kits and camp-beds—the paraphernalia of warfare and destruction. But in the center there remains the majestic image of Buddha, seated on a raised platform, with the serene and unperturbed face, looking down upon this strange sight with infinite pity in his eyes for poor humanity thus gone astray, yet patiently waiting for its return to the path of peace and brotherly love. To see

this is truly to see the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place, but military necessity knows no sanctity.

The failure of the first wave of Buddhist revival to achieve spiritual results was in large measure due to the lack of a truly great spiritual leader. Now such a leader seems to have appeared in the person of T'ai Shu Fa Sz, a monk of great learning and saintly character, and with his appearance has commenced the second wave of Buddhist revival. As the first was political in nature, the second is essentially spiritual. A genuine desire to reform monasticism, to reconstruct Buddhist theology according to modern philosophy, and to promote human welfare on the basis of the teachings of Buddha is the dominant note. Instead of attempting to organize a nation-wide society to include all Buddhists, spiritually minded monks and laymen have united to form a society for the working out of the new ideas and aims and adopted for it the significant name of Bodhi (Enlightenment) Society. The objects of the new organization are set forth in the following words:

1. To propound the essence of Mahayana Buddhism so that opposition may be dissolved, doubts removed, faith strengthened, religion energized, and mankind transformed into saintly and heavenly beings.
2. To propagate the essence of Mahayana Buddhism, so that the wicked may be led into lovingkindness, the selfish persons to righteousness, the wise to thirst for the doctrine, the strong to love of virtue, and the struggling misery-filled world transformed into a place of peace and happiness.

Membership requirements are high. To be a member one must express sympathy for the objects of the society and faith in the Three Treasures (Buddha, Law, and Order); he must also declare the Four Great Vows (to save all beings, to destroy all passions, to know and teach others to know the law, and to lead others to understand the teachings of Buddha) and observe the Ten Commandments (not to kill, not to steal, not to commit adultery, not to lie, not to exaggerate, not to

slander, not to be double-tongued, not to covet, not to be angry, not to be heretical). Besides these he has to be diligent in the study of the sutras and observance of rules of fasting, meditation, and charity. The society was first formed in 1915.

For effective propaganda the society publishes a monthly magazine, called *Hai Chao Yin* (the Voice of the Sea Waves). It aims to lift the voice of Mahayana Buddhism for the guidance of mankind tossed as it is by the waves of modern thought. The magazine contains (1) exposition of Buddhist doctrines, as, for instance, a new commentary of "Mahayana Craddhotpada-castra" (Awakening of Faith); (2) apologetics or defense of the faith in face of modern criticism; (3) advocacy of reformation, as reorganization of the monastic order; (4) testimonials: stories of conversion experience, lives of saintly devotees, etc.; (5) critical review of works on religion and philosophy, especially on Buddhism. It is of high literary quality and is edited by T'ai Shu Fa Sz himself.

About the early life of the new leader little is known. He is much sought after for spiritual advice and for conducting lecture and devotional meetings. His writings are read extensively and through them he exercises great influence upon thinking men and women of the day. He has travelled in Japan and there met some of the leaders of Japanese Buddhism. From his autobiographical sketch which appeared in the first issue of the *Hai Chao Yin*, the following is extracted, as showing the spirit of the man:

T'ai Shu, in youth, did not know Buddhism. Later I was attracted to it and I studied deeply into Buddhist books. After some time knowledge of the Buddha came to me like a pearl, lost and found again, and with it, as with a mirror, I was enabled to see clearly through the changes of this life and the world.

Toward the last days of the Tsing (Manchu) Dynasty, the wish gradually formed within me of applying the law of Buddha for the harmonizing of the philosophies of ancient and modern times and of the east and the west, and of leading the nations of the whole world to

follow the teachings of Sakyamuni. Since then, during the past decade, through circumstances favorable and unfavorable, whether travelling abroad or staying at home, whether engaged in mundane affairs or retired in lonely hermitage, this wish has not for one moment been permitted to leave my mind.

Then the European War broke out. Added to the rottenness of the inward life of man, was the brutal struggle of the outward world. I was convinced of the magnitude of the human calamity, which like a wagon-load of hay on fire could not be extinguished with a cupful of water.

Since it was ordained that I should wait until the ripe time to carry out my wish, I decided to make use of the waiting to exercise my religion [contemplation], and so I "shut myself" on Pootoo Island for three years.

After that, I travelled in Japan and Taiwan and wherever convenient I preached the doctrine. [He published afterward an account of his travels.]

The next year, I was invited to visit the South Sea Islands [where there are colonies of prosperous Chinese emigrants]. I formed the idea of building a National Monastery. My observation leads me to feel that the monastic institutions in our country have fallen away from ancient pure ideals and are corrupt beyond reform. If I could raise the fund from people abroad, I would build the national monastery [as model of renewed and purified monasticism]. If I should fail to attain my object I would reconcile myself to the life of a wandering mendicant and, leaning upon Buddha's mercy, thus travel to my life's end.

When I was at Pootoo, some earnest devotees requested me to lecture on "Wei-shi-lun" [Shastra Vidyamatrasiddhi]. I talked to them about my wish to reform monastic institutions and my plan to go south. They also saw the works I have written. They strongly advised against the southern trip at the time as the European War was at its height, and it would be difficult to raise money there, but urged me to publish my works and to organize a society for the promotion of Buddhism in China as the first step of my larger plans. And so we organized the "Bodhi Society" in Shanghai

[Mentioned plans for establishment of Buddhist University, model monasteries for training preachers, encouraging philanthropies, etc., also raising fund for trip around the world in the interest of Buddhism.]

Lately I have been living in Chin-Van Yuan Monastery, on the side of the Western Lake, Hangchow. Here I had desired to live quietly for

the practice of contemplation, but the members of the Bodhi Society have asked me to edit a new magazine, called *Hai Chao Yin* [the Voice of Sea Waves] to meet the needs of the time. I have consented to do it for one year, as the work is congenial to my original wish, and so for this year, I have decided to lay aside other work and devote myself to editing the magazine. What of the future, a year hence, none could foretell. But at the close of ten thousand years, the Tathagata will surely raise up men to establish the Law and spread it throughout the world of the living. I shall wait awhile.

[Dated 20th Day of 11th Moon of 2946th year after Buddha (1920)]
—H. C. Y., Vol. I.

T'ai Shu, being a monk himself, is fully conscious of the weakness of the Buddhist church (1) in the lack of efficient organization for propagation of the religion, and (2) in the corruption of the monastic order, and so he has addressed himself to the task of reorganization and reformation. He proposes to have a national system embracing preaching chapels and parishes in every city, a certain number of monasteries and charitable institutions in each province, and a national monastery and university in the capital city of the country. As a part of the national institution he would have a library containing an extensive collection of Buddhist literature and a museum for Buddhist art. Into the museum he would have all images moved, so that other buildings could be free of them. Belonging as he does to the Dhyana or Meditation School, founded by Bodhidharma in the sixth century, T'ai Shu is opposed to idolatry and tolerates it only as an accommodation to the weakness of the masses. As to the monks, he would encourage manual labor as an antidote to laziness and would encourage more time being spent for meditation and study for spiritual development. In his account of his travels in Japan and Taiwan he had a brief reference to his daily life to the effect that it has been his practice to spend at least three or four hours every day in meditation, and he has never allowed a day to pass without it, even the busiest day, during the past ten years. How far he will be able to carry out the

reforms he has conceived in his mind only time will show. Meanwhile he has been influential in winning many serious-minded men and women to the pursuit of the religious (monastic) life.

In the spring of 1920, three men renounced the world and entered the Order together, adopting as their religious names, Great Mercy, Great Awakening and Great Valour. They were litterati and had served the Republic in public life, but were converted through the preaching of T'ai Shu to become teachers of the Law of Buddha. On taking the step each person wrote out a statement giving his reasons for his action. On reading these statements, which appeared in the *Hai Chao Yin*, one realizes what a strong appeal the simple gospel of Buddha still makes on the minds of men and women in the East, who, dissatisfied with existing conditions in life, are seeking a way of escape whereby they could rise above the turmoil and adversities of troublesome life, be free from the shackles of circumstances, and have peace of mind. In the practice of self-discipline, of strenuously controlling and suppressing one's insatiable desires—the root of all misery in the world—that Buddha taught twenty-five centuries ago, men feel they have found the way of salvation for themselves and for others, and having found it they become, like Buddha himself, fervent messengers in bringing the truth to others. The following, taken from one of the above-mentioned statements, expresses the spirit of the present movement in Buddhism:

The Law of Buddha is the most true, most excellent, most profound, and most universal way for all phenomenal and supra-phenomenal worlds—unexcelled and the only one—because it meets the sore need of the world, which is spiritual, of the heart. Let us consider the recent world-war as a case to the point. Did it not arise on account of the greed, ignorance, and madness of human egotism? The greater the desire, the greater the seeking; blind movement leading to blind steps; eager for struggle, eager for victory; false grappling, false possession;—from such activity [deeds] on the part of many there has resulted the world calamity. To go forward with such a heart, unchanged, then,

the more one tries to restore order, the greater will be the chaos. And so to seek for true, universal and permanent peace and happiness, the only way efficacious is for everyone to be willing in his heart to reduce desire, to be contented, to cease struggling, and relinquish one's hold. Hence my conviction that world-salvation requires the Law of Buddha. But this cannot be accomplished without my earnestly and speedily proclaiming the Law among men. To do this, the best way is for me to strengthen my will, study the doctrine and thus prepare myself to give my personal testimony of faith. Hence the primary step of entering the Order. My now doing this, namely, leaving family and society and learning the Law of Buddha is to prepare myself for the task of saving the world with the Law. It is not dissimilar to my previous action of leaving home and studying Military Art to prepare myself for the task of saving my own country. The difference is that previously my aim was the salvation of my country and people, while now my aim is the salvation of all living creatures.—*H. C. Y.*, Vol. I.

Not only are men renouncing the world and entering the monastic order, but educated women are doing it also. In *Hai Chao Yin* was published a remarkable letter written by a young woman to T'ai Shu for spiritual advice. Documents of this kind, recording as this does the inner spiritual life in non-Christian religions, are not common or easily accessible, and so we have given below the letter as a whole.

At present, Buddhism has deteriorated and reached the lowest ebb. The main reason is the corruption of monastic orders, male and female. The monks and nuns do not know how to save themselves, not to think of their saving others. Not one out of a hundred can keep the discipline and read the sutras. This is indeed most sad. So I think we cannot hope for improvement of the condition unless there come forward monks and nuns, of genuine motive for saving the world, with deep knowledge of the Law and respect for the Order, (1) to purify the monastic life and (2) to propagate the religion. But how few are such choice spirits, like your reverend self, and others [mentioned by name]. If only more would take up the monastic vow! But some say that one may serve Buddha without laying aside family and social life. In my opinion, at the present time, to purify monastic life and propagate the religion, it is absolutely necessary to shave off the hair and enter the Order. I am therefore greatly surprised to read in one of the numbers of the Magazine

that you, reverend Sir, wrote, "The best way is to practice bodhi without forsaking the world [becoming a monk]." Now, you, reverend Sir, are yourself a monk; why then advise others against becoming monks? There must be a reason. Will you instruct me?

Formerly I was a student at a school, and was not inclined to believe in Buddhism. Later unconsciously my faith sprang up and then I became convinced that the Law of Buddha is the absolute and only true religion, unbounded and most lovable. So at the age of 19, I made a vow before Buddha, that in this life I would never marry but give my life to Him as a nun. I have kept this vow for four years, and many times I wanted to shave off my hair, but was prevented by my parents. I am sorry that I cannot be a nun early in life. I have three friends with the same mind. One is married, but she daily thinks of shaving off her hair and "forsaking the world"; only she is prevented from doing so by her husband. But she is persuading him to become a monk, and I won't be surprised if they two should "forsake the world" together before the end of the year. [For a girl to be able to shave off her hair and be a nun it is the most happy thing. Now-a-days some nuns complain that their lives are unhappy, while the lives of lay-folk are happy. I really cannot understand their way of thinking.] The other two friends were both my school-mates. One is called "Pure root"; she has no parents, but a brother,—none to prevent her—and so she became a nun in the spring of last year. The other is only 18 and yet her determination to "forsake the world" is unusually strong. This year her mother wanted to betroth her to someone, and so she decided to leave home secretly. I recommended her to a certain nunnery. Of us four, two have already realized their wish, leaving my cousin and myself outside of the fold. I feel grieved and also envious of their good fortune.

At first we thought that by becoming nuns we would escape from the world's misery and sorrow, enjoy peace, and work off by penance some of our sinfulness. Furthermore, by becoming nuns we sisters could live together and never be separated, which is supreme joy.

But now after reading *Hai Chao Yin*, we know that "to forsake the world" is to benefit others, not ourselves. Having known this my will to be a nun has become stronger than ever. I wish that I could now and here shave off my hair. I have a few questions which I hope my Master in the Law will answer fully. I shall be most grateful: (1) How could one secure parents' and elders' consent? (2) Failing to secure the consent, could one be justified in secretly leaving home and

entering the Order? (3) How could one get rid of the emotion of love? (4) Could one abandon one's husband and be a nun? (5) Is it right to persuade one's wife, husband, or others to "forsake the world"? (6) Is it right to abandon one's children and become a nun? (7) If I were a man I would have chosen you, Sir, as my Teacher, but being a woman that is not proper. Could you recommend to me a nunnery where I can go?

In my study of the sutras, I have unfortunately none to teach me. I can only try my best to recite them, with or without true understanding. In case I come across passages I cannot understand, would you permit me to write you for help?

. . . . Kindly reply through the magazine.

[Signed: Purified Heart]

P.S. I am determined, whatever happens, to shave off the hair this year. After becoming a nun, I propose to reform and change the life of the nunnery with all my might. I hope to ask your advice in the future.—*H. C. Y.*, Vol. V.

As yet this spiritual revival in Buddhism is confined to a small group of educated monks and lay brothers, and the vast mass of Buddhist monks and nuns (estimated at 400,000 monks and 10,000 nuns) are untouched by it. The latter still continue their religious life in the conventional way, bow before the image of Buddha, repeat the sutras without understanding, and trust to the magic password *Namo Omito Fo* (*Namu Amida Butsu*)—"Praise to Amida Buddha"—for entry into "western paradise" after death. The reformers have a great task before them in purifying and energizing the faith of this multitude. Will the revival succeed in transforming Buddhism to meet the changed conditions and demands of modern life, so that it will stand out in Asia as a rival to Christianity or Mohammedanism for centuries to come, or will the revival fail in its object and leave this ancient religion to the fate of ultimate extinction from internal corruption and external disruption? The question is not easy to answer, but one feels that the essentially pessimistic spirit of Buddhism and its

conception of the worthlessness of life are fundamentally opposed to and incompatible with the buoyancy of the modern spirit and the modern conception of the worthfulness of life, and unless Buddhism is transformed to fit in with the new age, as a religion it has no vital message, although as a philosophy of life its influence will persist in men's thinking. But Buddhism with its pessimistic spirit and outlook amputated will no longer be itself, but become something else, although the name may remain. Buddhist reformers are trying hard to find a way out of the dilemma, and the probable course they will take, as indeed they have already done, is to return to Sakyamuni's Ethics of the Middle Path and make it their creed and message. But in doing this the Buddhist reformers will meet with a serious difficulty in the question: What is the goal of the ethical life in a system that denies human personality and social reality? And so when one reviews the work of the reformers, so heroic and devoted in their effort to stem the tide of disintegration and to build up the glory of their religion in a new age, one senses in them a feeling of loneliness, want of self-confidence, and the absence of genuine zest for lack of an adequate goal. We recall the pathos of what T'ai Shu, the leading reformer, said: "If I should fail to attain my object, I would reconcile myself to the life of a wandering mendicant, and, leaning upon Buddha's mercy, travel thus to my life's end."